

Brittany Jones  
Self-Eval/Reflection  
Methods F12

To My Esteemed Professors,

I chose to write about the challenges the Native Americans faced when forced to walk the Trail of Tears.” I chose this topic because of my Native American heritage. I thought this topic was going to be a lot more challenging than it was. I discovered that there are, actually, tons of primary sources for this topic. In the 1930 the government employed writers through the FWP, just like with the slave narratives, to go out and record the stories of families who were involved with the “Trail of Tears.” I learned so much about the Native Americans who endured this trial and there are also accounts from after they reached the new territory. The only hard part about this project was choosing what to put into my paper. There was so much that I could use but I just couldn’t fit it all in.

I would give myself a 2.5 on my final draft. I think it is one of the better pieces I have written. When I first began to write I thought I would just write about the actual journey itself. Then I learned that there were actually two main groups who were forced from their homes. I chose to focus on the larger one that began the march in the fall. Then I was going to cover things that I found in one of my primary sources. This source was from a white man who was a soldier who walked a long side the Native Americans during the removal. On his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday he wrote a letter detailing everything he witnessed during this time. He told about so much, it was just as incredible as it was harrowing. I wanted to bring supporting detail from the stories of others so I just made of list of everything in his letter and found things from others that went a long with it. Eventually I had to pick and chose because there was just so much that I could talk

about. So, finally, I chose to focus on just the weather, living conditions and the treatment from the soldiers.

I read several pieces about this topic. I read historical articles about it and other informational pieces, I research books, both fiction and non-fiction about the subject, There really is an abundance of information on the topic but none were better than the personal accounts of those who were there. The thing that, I think, really stood out in my paper were the quotes that I chose to use, they really made the reality of the situation truly come to life. They gave voice to the thousands of faceless people who walked this trail, giving voices to those who died and those lived on to tell their stories. I really think they are the best part of my paper and I tried to incorporate them in a respectful and reverent manner through the writing that I did. This paper could have been much, much longer, if I had more time. I could write a small book with all the information!

Perhaps one day I will revisit this topic and maybe I will write a book on it. Much more research would be required but I think it would be worth it. I think there are a lot of voices that still have not been heard. This Project opened my eyes to the fact that there is so much history that we can talk about one topic for months and still only brush the surface, not only with this topic but also countless others. The inquiry process caused me to want to share this revelation with my future students. History is, unfortunately and ironically, a dying subject. It worries me that fewer and fewer people care about the past, when it is only from looking at past that we can truly grow as a society and as a species. I was so amazed about what I learned from this topic, if I can inspire my future students to also find amazing things in history then I feel like I would have won a small victory. I think this project could be modified, down sized or expanded; there

are a lot of ways to incorporate something like this into the classroom. I definitely believe I will use, at least, something like this in the future.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to push my learning ability to new heights. It was an experience that I will not forget.

Sincerely,

Brittany H. Jones